



## **COP 27 November 12th Reflections**

What does Jesus' admonition about faith say to us today as we grapple with the exigencies of climate change? First, that we must have faith, and keep faith with ourselves, individually, nationally, globally. And we must keep faith with our home, our planet, so that she can begin to heal herself once we stop exacerbating her wounds.

Earth shows us the way, as Jesus does in this parable, through the mustard seed. A seed is so tiny, yet dynamic, and contains so much life to grow, to live, to give. We must each take the mustard seeds of our efforts, have faith in them, nurture and support them in our relationships at every level.

As Pope Francis so eloquently puts it in *Laudato Si*, even small, individual steps contribute. They

encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.

We must not think that these efforts are not going to change the world. They benefit society, often unbeknown to us, for they call forth a goodness which, albeit unseen, inevitably tends to spread. Furthermore, such actions can restore our sense of self-esteem; they can enable us to live more fully and to feel that life on earth is worthwhile.

Each action, each mustard seed we plant and cultivate, contributes to the health and well-being of all creation. There is no more urgent or important work.

Susan M. Hickman, Associate of The Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois, USA